

CLAIMS

1. An encryption key stored in a PLD comprising:
  - a plurality of key bits for defining an encryption algorithm; and
  - at least one bit for indicating whether more keys will follow.
2. The encryption key of Claim 1 wherein the at least one bit for indicating whether more keys will follow comprises:
  - two bits for indicating whether the key is first, middle, last, or only of a set of keys.
3. The encryption key of Claim 1 wherein the plurality of key bits comprises 56 bits.
4. The encryption key of Claim 1 wherein the encryption algorithm comprises the DES algorithm.
5. The encryption key of Claim 1 wherein the at least one bit for indicating whether more keys will follow is one bit.
6. The encryption key of Claim 1 wherein the at least one bit for indicating whether more keys will follow specifies the number of additional keys that will follow.
7. The encryption key of Claim 1 wherein the at least one bit for indicating whether more keys will follow specifies whether the key is a first key.
8. The encryption key of Claim 1 wherein the at least one bit for indicating whether more keys will follow specifies whether the key is a last key.